



Marriott Stanton South Beach is a tranquil getaway. It is oceanfront yet adjacent to the nightlife buzz for which the Miami neighbourhood is noted. *MARRIOTT STANTON SOUTH BEACH*

THE DECO DARLING OF SOUTH BEACH

Life at The Stanton is peaceful, charming, but still within a short walk of the action



ROCHELLE LASH

The Marriott Stanton South Beach glows with the light and luxe of South Beach, but this is SoBe with a difference.

In the era of micro-neighbourhoods, the Stanton is South of Fifth (SoFi), a mostly residential area that is more tranquil, tony and tasteful than the hotbed of notorious nightclubs and celebrity frenzy that we see on screen.

Stanton life is peaceful no matter which way you look. The South Beach Boardwalk, a walking and cycling trail, passes by the hotel along the oceanfront, and a sprawling park is adjacent. Plus, Ocean Drive is a lot quieter than Miami Beach's main drag, Collins Ave.

The Stanton stands apart from the fray, but still it is within a few

blocks of South Beach's action and cultural icons, including the Art Deco Welcome Centre, Lincoln Road, Art Basel (the annual December cultural extravaganza), the Miami Beach Convention Centre, the Miami City Ballet, the Jewish Museum of Florida and The Wolfsonian, dedicated to art and design objects.

The news: The Marriott Stanton South Beach is a 1939 Art Deco treasure that has been thoroughly restored and modernized, starting with the historic facade and the Art Deco tower, and into the lobby, spa and fitness area, meeting spaces, pools, sun decks and two new restaurants.

If simplicity is the essence of good taste, this hotel has it. The 224 rooms, including eight suites, sport the look of a contemporary, sun-bleached beach house, bathed in soft shades of white and sand, with silvery leather furniture and pale wood trim. Surfboard-inspired decor and glass balconies in almost all rooms complete the picture. The bathrooms are white marble.

Martin Brudnizki Design Studio crafted the common areas. The tiny lobby is a Deco darling, with a curved leather sofa and a wonderful, eclectic collection of Florida-inspired prints, mostly surfing and seascapes.

The design scene gets even more interesting at Lolo's Surf Cantina, on the hotel's lower level. A work of living art, this funky hideaway by Brudnizki is a whimsical re-creation of a vintage Mexican café, right down to the scuffed tiled floors, worn wooden chairs and hundreds of vintage posters, photos and plaques. You'd swear Lolo's is 80 years old, but it was built less than two years ago.

Cuisine, two ways: Lolo's is great for margaritas and mescal, plus starters and sharing plates of hot wings, shishito peppers, spicy chicken tostadas and traditional tortilla soup. Main courses include seafood enchiladas, grilled chicken, fried snapper, grilled mahi-mahi and ribs. On Tuesdays, tacos and tequila are half price.

Azabu Miami Beach, off the lobby, is a totally different experience. It's the place for high-end Japanese sushi and Robata cuisine (tableside grilling). Inspired

by the Michelin-starred Sushi Azabu New York, the Miami Beach eatery has different sections, all dimly lit and exotic: a full-service dining room with an open kitchen, an outdoor garden, a sushi counter called The Den, and Bar Azabu, which serves classic cocktails with a focus on whiskey and sake, and drinks with yuzu, lemongrass and chili.

Azabu has a raw bar with scallops, lobster, oysters and Russian caviar; and dishes include classics like miso soup, tempura, and yakitori, plus delicacies like wagyu beef, crab-fried rice, tiger prawns and miso black cod.

Stanton Spa: The Stanton offers both laid-back spa treatments and action-packed fitness. Instructors lead classes (one a day, free for guests) that might be boot camp, mat Pilates, kick-boxing or barre exercise.

Signature services include couples' massage, hot seashell therapy for relaxation and the South Beach Ritual, which combines a scrub and massage. Aromatherapy Associates of England supplies some lotions, organic and infused with scents of flowers, rosemary, mandarin orange and sandalwood. *rochelle@rochellelash.com*

IF YOU GO

Marriott Stanton South Beach: 305-536-7700, stantonsobe.com or marriott.com; 161 Ocean Dr., Miami Beach. Marriott rewards apply and best rate is available at marriott.com.

Prices fluctuate: Rooms start at US\$230; suites start at US\$430, plus resort fee, \$28 (weekends and U.S. holiday periods are higher), including two welcome margaritas, two pools/hot tub, beach setups, beach games, sundeck, bicycles, daily fitness class, fitness centre, ultra-high-speed Wi-Fi, in-room coffee, bathrobes, evening turndown on request.

Stanton Spa: 786-276-2052, stantonsobe.com/spa.

Azabu Miami: 786-276-0520, azabumiami.com; dinner nightly from 6 p.m.; happy hour 6-8 p.m.

Lolo's Surf Cantina: 305-735-6973, loloscantina.com; breakfast, lunch, dinner, happy hour daily; half-price Tuesdays.

Greater Miami Tourism: 305-539-3000, gmcbv.com, miamianbeaches.com.

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